

Solomon Islands

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under age 15 in Solomon Islands are unavailable.⁴²⁶⁸ Commercial sexual exploitation of children is a problem in the Solomon Islands.⁴²⁶⁹

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory,⁴²⁷⁰ and school fees are high relative to family incomes.⁴²⁷¹ Some children are reportedly denied access to education due to early entrance into work.⁴²⁷² In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 107 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 72 percent.⁴²⁷³ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Primary school attendance statistics are not available for the Solomon Islands.⁴²⁷⁴

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 12. Children may participate in light agricultural or domestic labor if they are employed by, or in the company of their parents.⁴²⁷⁵ Children under the age of 15 are prohibited from working in industry or on ships, except on approved training ships, and children under the age of 18 may not work in underground mines.⁴²⁷⁶ The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in the Solomon Islands. The Constitution

⁴²⁶⁸ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section in the front of the report for information about sources used. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the section titled "Data Sources and Definitions."

⁴²⁶⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, online, CRC/C/51/Add.6, Geneva, July 12, 2002, 115; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.51.Add.6.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.51.Add.6.En?OpenDocument). See also ECPAT International, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and UNICEF, *Delegates Agree to Strengthen Efforts to Reduce Demand for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, Bangkok, November 11, 2004; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/mtr.asp.

⁴²⁷⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 89.

⁴²⁷¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Solomon Islands*, Section 5. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 90.

⁴²⁷² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Solomon Islands*, CRC/C/15/Add.208, Geneva, July 2, 2003, 14; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/ccf51b3b3aa93c91c1256db90024ca4c?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/ccf51b3b3aa93c91c1256db90024ca4c?Opendocument).

⁴²⁷³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005). For an explanation of gross primary enrollment rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definition of gross primary enrollment rates in the "Data Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

⁴²⁷⁴ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section for information about sources used.

⁴²⁷⁵ Section 84 of the Labor Act, as cited in the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 111.

⁴²⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2004: Solomon Islands*, Section 6d.

prohibits slavery and forced labor.⁴²⁷⁷ The procurement of girls under 18 years of age for the purposes of prostitution is prohibited under the Penal Code (“Offences Against Morality”).⁴²⁷⁸ The Penal Code provides sanctions for the abduction of children.⁴²⁷⁹ There are no armed forces in the Solomon Islands, however the minimum age for recruitment into the border police force is 18.⁴²⁸⁰

The Labor Division of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry is tasked with enforcing child labor laws,⁴²⁸¹ and the Commissioner of Labor is designated to implement and enforce child labor laws. According to the U.S. Department of State, the government devotes almost no resources to child labor cases. In the Ministry of Health, there are six social welfare officers. They have received limited training from international welfare groups, but no child labor investigations were conducted during 2005. There is no information on any fines, penalties or convictions relating to child labor.⁴²⁸²

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of the Solomon Islands has a National Youth Policy to address the welfare needs of youth ages 14 to 29.⁴²⁸³ In order to promote access to primary education, the government has abolished school fees. The government’s efforts to improve teacher training facilities and to provide more materials for schools have been hampered by its limited budget.⁴²⁸⁴

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138	
Ratified Convention 182	
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children (Youth Policy)	✓
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

Through the UN Development Assistance Framework 2003-2007, UN agencies are working with the government to improve access, quality, and delivery of basic services, including basic education.⁴²⁸⁵ The country’s National Education Master Plan 1999-2010 includes provisions to improve the quality, scope, and relevance of education.⁴²⁸⁶ The Ministry of Education has developed training programs and services for primary and secondary school teachers and education administrators.⁴²⁸⁷

⁴²⁷⁷ Constitution of the Solomon Islands, 1978, Article 6; available from

http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Solomon_Islands_legislation/Solomons_Constitution.html.

⁴²⁷⁸ Penal Code, Chapter 5, Part XVI, Sections 128-146, as cited in UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*.

⁴²⁷⁹ Section 229 of the Penal Code as cited in *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴²⁸⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Solomon Islands* [online] [cited September 21, 2005]; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/document-get.php?od=877>.

⁴²⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Solomon Islands*, Section 6d.

⁴²⁸² U.S. Embassy- Port Moresby, *reporting*, September 14, 2005.

⁴²⁸³ UN, *Common Country Assessment: Solomon Islands*, previously online, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, 2002, 75; available from <http://www.undp.org.fj/CCAs.htm> [hard copy on file].

⁴²⁸⁴ U.S. Embassy- Port Moresby, *reporting*, September 14, 2005.

⁴²⁸⁵ UN, *Solomon Islands: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2003-2007)*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, [online] 2002 [cited July 21, 2003], Foreword, 11; available from http://www.undp.org.fj/documents/UNDAF_SOLIS_17%20JULY.doc.

⁴²⁸⁶ Mr. Johnson Moffat Ramoni, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Solomon Islands*, UNESCO, [online] [cited February 11, 2004]; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/solomon_islands/rapport_3.html.

⁴²⁸⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 90.